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BEIRUT

wonders on the occasion of the forthcoming meeting of the Arab League Political Committee whether Lebanon will "say its say in the Committee or it will oscillate, as it has so far been doing, between the two camps and claim complete neutrality and isolation.." The paper also wonders what position the other Arab states will take on the present international struggle, whether they will also uphold complete neutrality, continue their isolation and hide their heads between their wings, like the ostrich, in order to avoid seeing the hunter. The paper then goes on to say:

"Many of us will say; 'What interest do we have in the existing struggle between the two blocs since the Western powers disappointed us in the first and second world war, since the two blocs disappointed in our war with Israel, and since we did not benefit anything from our sacrifices except the homelessness of one million Arabs and the loss of a sacred Arab country which is Palestine? Neither we nor any one else can deny these facts. But can not we define our attitude toward the two blocs and proclaim that we are with the Western bloc which upholds the principles in which the Arabs believe - principles of liberty and human dignity? Can not we make the Western bloc pay, after this, the price for joining its camp which is our natural camp and in which we must stand firm...? We must take from the Western powers all that could be possibly taken for the sake of our long-range Arab interests because it is not reasonable on our part to co-operate with the Soviet bloc and to offer our liberties and human dignity as the price for such co-operation despite the fact that Russia gained the atomic bomb and China in this interval and despite the belief held by some - which is an erroneous belief - that the Western powers, headed by America and Britain, have lost their military might in the last five years and have become a dwarf from the military standpoint in relation to Russia.

"The meeting in Cairo of the Arab League Political Committee must be decisive this time, in which we must frankly say our word. Lebanon, our homeland, must play its role in this historic meeting and must advocate liberties and human dignity because there is no sky which will protect us from the storm, when it blows, except the sky of liberties and human dignity."

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present international situation:

"Many rumors circulated yesterday regarding the decision the Council of Ministers and the Chairman of the Foreign Affairs Committee reached in respect of Lebanon's position toward the world struggle. Our correspondent inquired of Philip Tacla, the Foreign Minister, concerning the results of this meeting. The Minister replied that the discussions dealt with the questions which are expected to be raised at the Political Committee's meeting. Then our correspondent asked him whether Lebanon had positively defined its position toward the two world camps, the Minister replied that this subject might be amongst the subjects which would be discussed by the Political Committee. Therefore, Lebanon prefers to define its position in conjunction with the Arab League states.

"The Ministers and deputies who attended the meeting were not franker than Philip Tacla. But they unanimously said that the discussions touched upon many issues headed by the disturbed international situation, America's special request for regarding China as an aggressor, the refugee problem, the methods followed in aiding the refugees, and the Syrian proposal for promoting co-operation between the Arab states.

"Our correspondent states that the discussions were conducted in the light of the reports that have been received from the Lebanese Ministers in the various capitals and of the talks which recently took place between Philip Tacla and the Ministers of the foreign powers in Beirut.

"It may be mentioned that all the reports openly refer to the disturbed international situation and the necessity of defining the attitude of Lebanon and of the Arab countries toward this situation.

"Perhaps the most important among these reports is the one Dr. Charles Malik, Lebanese Minister in Washington, has sent in which he frankly declares that there will be no neutrality after now and that Lebanon and the Arab countries must clearly define their attitudes toward the two great camps.

"Those who attended the meeting felt that the interests of Lebanon and of the Arab countries were consistent with those of the democracies and that if there were any demands on the part of Lebanon and the Arab countries these demands must not be made a basic condition for joining the democratic powers..."

AL-HAYAT (Editor: Kamil Muruwa, Shia-Moslem, independent)

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discusses the present international situation and its impact on the Arab countries whose geographic position, it claims, places them in the point of the first explosion. Thus, the paper continues:

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"We are a permanent link between the Mediterranean Basin and the whole of Asia and between Europe and Africa. On this basis, any discussion of the existing international disputes affects us directly. Is it possible therefore that others should determine our fate while we are busy with elections and internal comedies? Wars do not respect frontiers or clauses. We saw in the last war how Germany swept off Norway, Denmark, Holland and Belgium and how the Allies swept off Iran, Syria, Lebanon and Iceland. How could the war respect perforated independences of the type which the foreigner has bequeathed to the Arab countries? Will it refrain from sweeping off or occupying any bases which it would need?"

The paper then asserts that the world situation is more dangerous than is generally believed by the Arab rulers and it therefore advises the Arab countries "to overcome the matterx at the meeting of the Political Committee by the formation of a unified Arab bloc to administer Arab foreign affairs above the narrow regionalisms. Otherwise, the Arab countries would be booty for the strong when the hour of danger strikes, or when the final settlement is made..."

AL-'AMAL (Maronite, opposition, organ of the Lebanese Phalange Party)

comments on the efforts of the Lebanese and the other Arab governments to define their official policies toward the present international dispute, and seizes this occasion to criticize the Lebanese government for its internal policy and for its failure to enlighten the public on the decisions it has taken regarding the international situation. However, the paper stands for neutrality and says in part:

"With regard to the people, they desire neutrality in their realistic logic - political neutrality toward the two opposing camps - neutrality which is expected to avoid dangers so that sacrifices would not be lost for those who have failed to provide us in advance with a sincere understanding on a general political plane; and which does not also oblige us to antagonize, without compensation, those whom we are unable to antagonize..."

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AN-NAHAR

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carries the following editorial under the heading "Neutrality and the Logic of Democracy"

"Yesterday, the Lebanese government had to take a position which presupposes the existence of a previous ideological decision. It has not confessed this decision to the people and we do not know whether it has confessed it to itself or not. With regard to this decision - the ideological decision - it is our abandonment of the neutrality the praises of which we have always sung without benefitting from its alleged advantages. Informed political circles positively assert that the Lebanese government

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yesterday decided to abandon neutrality and to join one camp only; and that the camp with which it decided to side is, naturally, the camp of the Western democracies. We say 'naturally' because it was not expected that the Lebanese government would side with another camp for numerous reasons and factors which dictated the attitude which was assumed yesterday and shackled the liberty of those who took the decision.

"These reasons and factors arise from the substance of the position of the government and indeed from the general Lebanese position. This position made our open siding with the West attendant upon the gradual and practical siding which preceded it and upon our aggressive attitude toward Communism and ultimately toward the power which bears the standard of the world Communist revolution. Needless to say, this implied shackling of the government's liberty arises from the policy the government has followed, thereby denying itself the privilege of choice, which is the condition of liberty.

"If we support the government in considering the act of joining the Western democratic camp as an inevitable necessity, we reproach it for having denied itself the privilege of choice, because it has by this denied itself the privilege of bargaining and made its final siding as a result of its practical siding and not as a result of the benefit of Lebanon - which is not the Lebanese government - from this siding.

"Furthermore, there is what is more important than this. The world division, which is based on military, political and economic interests, is founded on, or is at least padded with, an ideological division. This means that the siding of one power with a certain camp presupposes, or must presuppose, harmony between the systems of this power with the principles upheld by the camp with which it is siding. It is therefore worth our while to ask: To what extent do our political systems harmonize with the democratic principles upheld by the West? To what extent does the immunity exists in the Lebanese state for resisting Communism - resistance to Communism principally depends upon the safeguarding of bread, justice and liberty.

"It is worth our while to ask this and it is also worth our while to wonder what is the extent of the confidence of the leaders of the camp we have now joined or almost joined, in our immunity against Communism?

"The reply to our first question is in the mouth of every Lebanese.

"The reply to our second question is presented, impliedly, by the speech of the US President when he reassured Congress, in his message of yesterday, that the future military and economic

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assistance to the friendly powers will be within conditions which depend upon the readiness of each of the receiving countries to implement the promises for building the joint defensive strength to combat international communist aggression.. and in the non-European countries the effort will be directed to help the peoples and the governments to strengthen their internal security by solving the persisting economic problems.."

"We hope that the American President remembered, when he said what he said, the Chinese experiment and the Korean experiment where America lost for itself and for democracy what it has lost because it granted aid to non-democratic conditions.."

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SALT AL-AHRAR

deplores the wide gap existing between the Lebanese government and the opposition elements because of the present Chamber of Deputies and urges the authorities, in view of the critical international situation, to seek the views of the opposition elements on the grave issues facing the country and to create a coalition government for the purpose of supervising the forthcoming elections.

This paper believes that the Lebanese Council of Ministers yesterday defined its final international position, regarded Communist China as an aggressor, and conveyed this decision to the representatives of the Western powers in Beirut pending the meeting of the Political Committee in Cairo.

A demonstration was held last evening at the Ashrafiya quarter against the prevailing high cost of living. The demonstrators carried torches, denounced speculators and demanded the provision of wheat and the stopping of war propaganda which some merchants are exploiting in order to rise their prices. A similar demonstration was held in Amyun in which all the people of the town took part. No incidents occurred during the two demonstrations and the police and gendarmes did not interfere with them.

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ASH-SHARQ

publishes in its editorial space the text of a manifesto which the GENERAL MILITARY COMMAND FOR THE LIBERATION OF PALESTINE has issued under the title: "Palestine is ours. Let our blood flow in rivers for Palestine. Our sacred duty is to recover Palestine. Be ready for the struggle." The manifesto violently attacks the decisions which UN has recently reached for the solution of the Palestine problem in the manner desired by England and America. Thus the second deal for eliminating the Arab people of Palestine has been effected." The manifesto calls upon the Arab youths to continue their struggle for Palestine and advises the refugees not to accept any solution which denies them the right to return. It then reminds the Arabs and the refugees:

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"Remember always that your three enemies are: The treacherous Zionists, the imperialistic countries, particularly America and Britain, and some of the Arab leaders who are known to you.."

In another article, the paper attacks Point Four program and claims that "if we accept the program, it will be realized at the expense of our nationalism and Arab culture.."